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Subject: **Jeffrey pine beetle activity on Mammoth and Mono Lake Ranger Districts**

To: John Regelbrugge, Mammoth District Ranger
Mike Schlafmann, Deputy District Ranger

In 2007, Beverly M. Bulaon (Entomologist) and Martin Mackenzie (Pathologist) were escorted by Andrew Weinhart to examine bark beetle-associated mortality around several locations in Sherwin Creek campground, along Deadman Creek Road, and in Glass Creek Campground. Beetles had killed over 60 trees within three years in all locations, primarily the larger diameter Jeffrey and lodgepole pines. Scott Kusumoto was already aware of this situation and had hired contractors to quickly remove currently beetle-infested trees before next summer in Sherwin Creek and Glass Creek campgrounds.

During a return visit on September 2, 2008, Beverly examined the same sites again to assess beetle activity. At two locations along Deadman Creek Road where infested Jeffrey pines still had yet to be removed, only three trees were found with new attacks compared to sixteen which were found in 2007. Further down the road, no new attacks were found among the lodgepole. No new infestations were found in Sherwin Creek or Glass Creek campgrounds. Other recreation areas on the district that had also been detected with insect activity in 2007 found the same low to no new infestations in 2008. Most of the dead trees examined were assessed to have been attacked in 2006 or 2007. There were a few scattered trees found with new Red Turpentine beetle attacks at the base – typically an indicator of tree stress, but not a primary mortality agent.

While attacks may have subsided for 2008, stand conditions in many of these areas are still highly susceptible to new infestations. Cold winter temperatures in 2007 may have killed a substantial number of beetle populations, causing the significant decline of new tree mortality. However, the initial infestations within these areas are indicators insects are highly attracted to trees in these stands – average diameters are large, and stocking is dense. The chronic loss of trees in Sherwin Creek campground supports this. Also, at Valentine Trailhead and Day use area Jeffrey pine beetle has been active – killing groups of pines since 2005. Only one successful attack was found on a 26-inch pine, but nearly twenty others had been killed previously. This situation creates a constant safety hazard for visitors and constant repetition of revisiting sites to remove dead trees.

Please contact Beverly M. Bulaon or Martin MacKenzie at 209-532-3671 if you have any questions or concerns.

/s/
Beverly M. Bulaon
Forest Health Protection
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cc: Dale Johnson
Scott Kusumoto
Andrew Weinhart